

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 15117

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TAGS: PFOR,UR,XO,PARM

SUBJECT: BREZHNEV ON NAVAL LIMITATIONS IN INDIAN OCEAN

REF: THE HAGUE 3408

1. SUMMARY. ACCORDING TO USA INSTITUTE DIRECTOR ARBATOV, HIS REMARKS TO CODEL HUMPHREY-SCOTT REGARDING THE SOVIET POSITION ON NAVAL DEPLOYMENTS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN STEMMED FROM BREZHNEV HIMSELF. THIS WAS LATER CORROBORATED BY USA INSTITUTE STAFFERS. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING A LENGTHY CONVERSATION ON U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS WITH CONGRESSMAN VANIK OCTOBER 16, ARBATOV SAID ON A STRICTLY "OFF-THE-RECORD- BASIS (PLEASE PROTECT ACCORDINGLY) THAT PRIOR TO CODEL HUMPHREY-SCOTT'S MEETING WITH BREZHNEV, SEVERAL MEMBERS ASKED ARBATOV WHETHER THE USSR WOULD BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS LIMITATIONS ON NAVAL DEPLOYMENTS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN WITH THE U.S. ON A BILATERAL BASIS. ARBATOV DID NOT HAVE AN AUTHORITATIVE ANSWER, SO WHEN HE PERSONALLY BRIEFED BREZHNEV JUST BEFORE THE LATTER'S MEETING WITH THE CODEL, ARBATOV NOTED THAT THIS QUESTION WAS LIKELY TO BE RAISED. BREZHNEV REPORTEDLY REPLIED THAT IF ASKED, HE WOULD SAY THAT THE ANSWER WAS "YES."

3. HOWEVER, ARBATOV CONTINUED, FOR WHATEVER REASON THE QUESTION WAS NOT ASKED OF BREZHNEV WHEN HE SAW
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THE CODEL. ARBATOV THEREFORE LATER APPROACHED

ONE OF THE CONCERNED SENATORS, SAID HE HAD LOOKED INTO THE QUESTION AND COULD STATE THAT THE USSR WAS INTERESTED.

4. AT DAO LUNCHEON FOR GENERAL GRAHAM OCTOBER 17, USA INSTITUTE MEMBERS B.D. YASHIN AND G.I. SVYATOV (BOTH RETIRED CANEER NAVAL OFFICERS WHO WORK ON NAVAL MATTERS) REMARKED IN SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBOFFS THAT THEY THOUGHT SOVIET POLICY ON NAVAL LIMITATIONS IS "UNCLEAR," AS THEY CONSIDERED U.S. POLICY TO BE. AT SAME TIME, MORE VOLUBLE SVYATOV, WHILE DISCLAIMING SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE AND STRESSING HE WORKED MAINLY ON SALT AND MBFR, NOTED RECURRENT BREZHNEV STATEMENTS ON NAVAL LIMITATIONS, CONFIRMED "HIGHEST LEVEL" CLEARANCE OF ARBATOV'S INDIAN OCEAN REMARKS TO SENATORS, AND SAID HE UNDERSTOOD SOVIETS HAD TAKEN SMALL PRIVATE STEPS TOWARD U.S. CONCERNING INDIAN OCEAN POSSIBILITIES, BUT U.S. HAD NOT RESPONDED. HE ASKED RHETORICALLY WHAT U.S. RESPONSE WOULD BE TO PROPOSAL FOR TALKS ON "PARITY OR ESSENTIAL EQUIVALENCE" OF GENERAL-PURPOSE NAVAL FORCES WORLDWIDE, WITH A REFERENCE TO LONDON AND WASHINGTON CONFERENCES BETWEEN THE WARS, AND SURMISED THAT IT WOULD NOT BE VERY POSITIVE AT THIS POINT.

5. COMMENT. PICTURE IS SOMEWHAT MURKY, BUT OUTLINES OF TWO FACTS WOULD SEEM TO EMERGE: ARBATOV'S REMARKS ON THE INDIAN OCEAN WERE IN FACT CLEARED WITH BREZHNEV, AND SOVIET POLICY CONCERNING NAVAL LIMITATIONS IS GENUINELY "UNCLEAR" AT THIS POINT.
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